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HD **Catherine McKenna to leave politics to focus more on fighting climate change**

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Former Minister of Environment and current Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna officially announced she will not run in the next election

Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna said Monday she will not run in the next election in order to spend more time with her family and on the fight against climate change.

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Ms. McKenna is the second high-profile cabinet minister not to reoffer in the next federal election, after former innovation minister Navdeep Bains said in January he wouldn't run again. She was already listed as a Liberal candidate for Ottawa Centre in an election that's widely expected for the late summer or fall.

"When I got into politics now eight years ago, I made two simple promises to myself," Ms. McKenna said at a press conference beside the Rideau Canal in Ottawa. "Always fight for what I believe in and leave when I had done what I got into politics to do."

Ms. McKenna was environment minister until the 2019 election, after which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shifted her to infrastructure.

Within hours of her appointment as environment minister in November, 2015, Ms. McKenna said she was working to negotiate the Paris Agreement on climate and she was in the French city within days for the start of talks. In that role she negotiated a new climate plan for the country and its minimum price on carbon.

But between 2016 and 2019, several provincial governments flipped from Liberal or NDP to Conservative, and her plan was strongly challenged, with multiple premiers taking Ottawa to court over the carbon price. In March, the top court sided with the federal government and ruled the law imposing a minimum price on greenhouse gas pollution is constitutional.

Ms. McKenna noted to the dozens of supporters who gathered for her press conference that opponents to the carbon price now support it. In a significant departure, Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole in April said his party would also have a carbon price if it wins government.

"To the many people who are understandably cynical about politics, I hope you take that as hard evidence of what's possible. Things can change. Sometimes, the biggest of things," Ms. McKenna said.

Ms. McKenna's exit opens up her Ottawa Centre riding for a new Liberal contender, leading to widespread speculation former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney will take a run for the seat. Mr. Carney made his political debut as a Liberal in April and since then has done nothing to quench rampant

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talk about his possible future in the House of Commons. He did not reply to a request for comment from The Globe and Mail on Monday.

In the only comment from the Prime Minister on Ms. McKenna's pending departure from politics, Mr. Trudeau thanked her on Twitter and said she "works tirelessly to tackle climate change, to protect our environment, to strengthen our communities, and to inspire women and girls."

Ms. McKenna said Monday that she offered the Prime Minister her help in the next climate talks, scheduled for this year in Glasgow, Scotland, but she provided no specifics. His office did not say whether she would be given a role.

She didn't close the door entirely on returning to elected politics later in life and said she would take the summer to decide what's next.

"This is a critical year for climate action in the most important decade that will decide whether we can save the only planet we have. I want to spend my working hours helping to make sure that we do," Ms. McKenna said.

Ms. McKenna rode the Liberal wave to office in 2015, and she was appointed to the first federal cabinet with gender parity. But she quickly found herself the target of personal attacks and threats that included confrontations from people while she was with her three children. At times, in a rare occurrence for a Canadian cabinet minister, she needed security detail.

Right-wing groups started an online troll campaign calling her a "climate Barbie," and former Conservative cabinet minister and MP Gerry Ritz was among the people who took up the sexist attack. He apologized amid widespread condemnation.

Ms. McKenna often addressed those attacks directly. At a 2017 press conference she asked a representative from Rebel, a right-wing website, for a commitment that the outlet stop calling her "climate Barbie."

Looking back, Ms. McKenna told reporters she's realized those attacks are "just noise."

"The people want you to stop doing what you're doing. They want you to back down, and guess what, we didn't back down on a price on pollution, we doubled down," she said. "For all the negativity, there are millions of other people on the other side who've supported me."

Members of all parties condemned the attacks she faced, and that disapproval was reiterated by some Conservatives on Monday. MP Dan Albas thanked Ms. McKenna and her family for their service.

"We should all take time to reflect on the abusive and toxic treatment that many women in public life are targeted with. Such actions are completely unacceptable," Mr. Albas wrote on Twitter.

At her press conference, Ms. McKenna said the only way the experiences of women and people from other underrepresented groups will change is to add more of them to the House of Commons.

"This should not be a message about not going into politics, this should be a message we need more of you in, and I'm creating space for folks to do it."

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